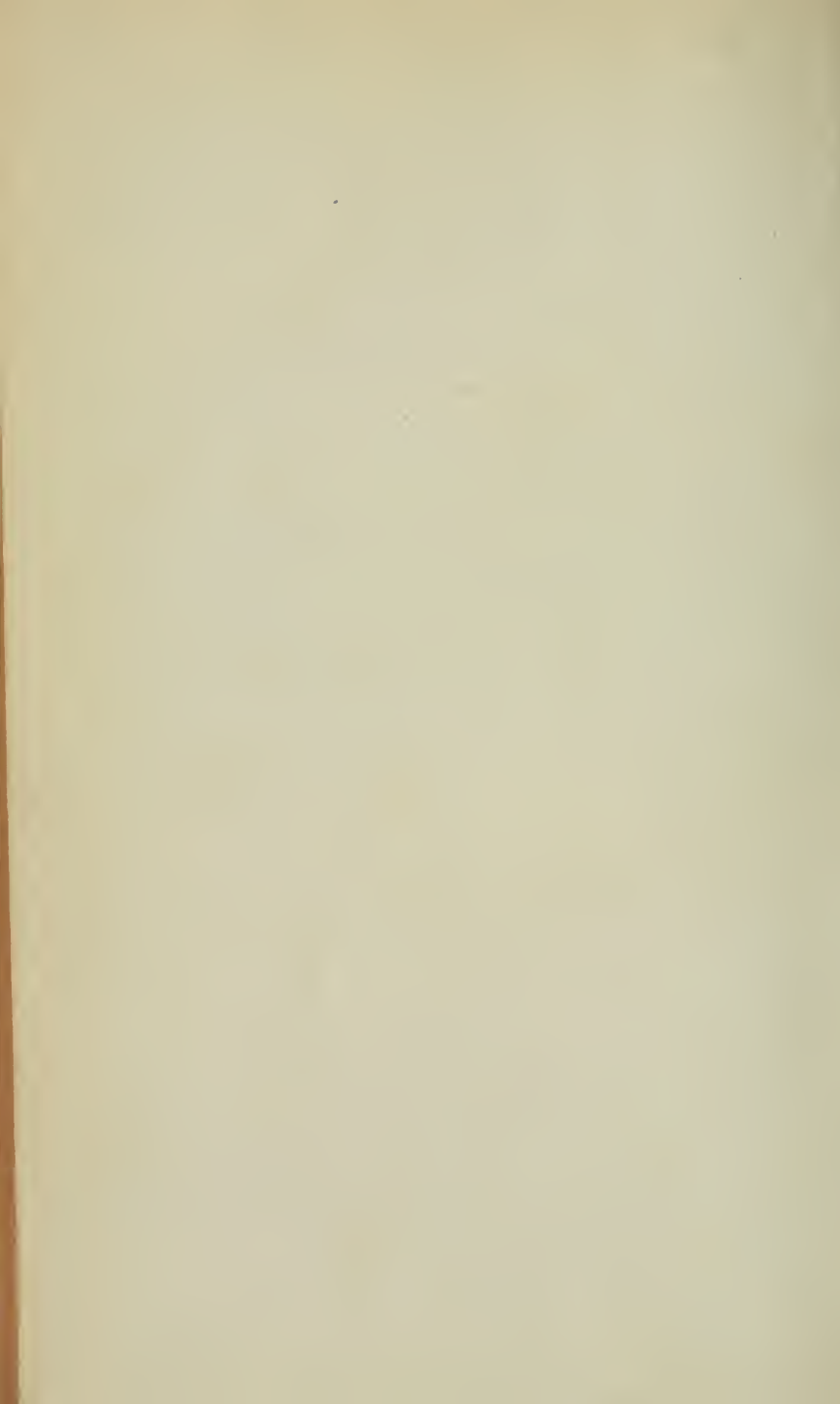




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THE WORLD'S DEBT TO ART:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN

THE TOWN HALL, AT HANLEY,

BY

A. J. B. BERESFORD HOPE, ESQ.,

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IN AID OF

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TO THE PRESIDENT,  
COMMITTEE,  
SUBSCRIBERS, AND STUDENTS OF  
THE ALBERT MEMORIAL SCHOOL OF ART  
THIS LECTURE  
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.





## THE WORLD'S DEBT TO ART.

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MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The subject which, by your kind indulgence and in aid of this Hanley School of Art, and in promotion of the Memorial of that great, good, and famous Patron of art whom we lost little more than a year ago, I am allowed to treat this evening, is "The World's Debt to Art." I know that when I speak to practical men of business about debts I must very clearly lay down what I mean, for debt is not a pleasant thing to talk of at any time. There are two sorts of debt—good and bad. Now a good debt, in the eyes of a man of business, is a debt which is likely, and a bad debt is one which is unlikely, to be got in. That is a point on which we are all agreed. But there may be another definition of good and bad debts—a distinction which moralists will be likely to draw. A good debt, in the eyes of a moralist, is a debt contracted for a good object, and a bad debt is one contracted for a bad object—for racing, or dicing, or in some speculation for sinking a submarine cable of sand between the Hebrides and the Pacific Ocean. That is a bad debt. But in both senses of

the word I hope to prove to you before we part that the debt aforesaid, in whose behalf I am to plead to-night, is a good debt. It is a debt easily collected and paid if we set to work the right way; and it is a debt for a good object. As it is a good debt, so it is one which all of us may and should help to pay to the best of our abilities. Now I wish you particularly to note what I am discussing. Do not run away with the idea that I want to call your attention to-night to the world's debt to artists. The world's debt to artists is also a good debt. It is a debt that the world too often forgets to pay, although contracted every day. It is a debt that may be paid either as this good free country, this England of ours, pays it—as these Potteries, in which we all take so great a pride, saw it paid this day, in the free assembly of thousands of our countrymen and countrywomen, under the open sky, by the statue raised to the man who was dead before the present generation was born, and before the fathers of many present came into being, but whose fame still lives for ever—the man whose good deeds have not died with him in the district of his birth and his choice. I say it may be paid by a free assembly of people gathered together, as we saw them at noon to-day, to inaugurate a statute which was raised by their own contributions; or else to raise an institution like that which we have met to-night to support, or like another undertaking in another portion of the Potteries with which other men specially propose to celebrate the same good Josiah Wedgwood. This is the world's debt to artists as Englishmen pay it; but that debt may equally be paid in other ways. It may be paid by court patronage and court smiles—by rosy, dimpled

looks, and taps on the shoulder with jewelled fans. It may be paid by orders and decorations—by golden whistles and diamond gridirons. Such honours Continental courts know how to offer as retaining fees. All these, in various ways, are the world's debt to artists, and the world's coin whereby that debt is paid. But I wish to withdraw you from the artist and to lead you to that art whose minister and exponent the artist is, well convinced as I am that man-worship—hero-worship—however good, and sound, and true in itself, may easily be carried to a vicious extent. I appeal to you in the strong conviction that if we do not look at the thing cultivated solely and simply, now and then,—if we confine our gaze to the cultivator—we spoil him, and his cultivation together, and, still more, we spoil ourselves: we make the pursuit of art on his part selfish; we make it gainful; we make it limited. I wish to show, in short, that the world's debt to art is a debt which every one has a share in, and which has an all-absorbing creditor. It is a huge joint-stock company, with limited liability, while every man, woman, and child is a shareholder, and may pay up his or her instalments with a perfect certainty of an ample return. At the same time it is a debt of which the lender is a power with the will and the way to take account of defalcations.

Before I go further, let me clear away one very prevalent error. It is the unhappy impression that art—by which I mean the science of beauty in material things—is something for holidays, and something for our play hours—something which stands apart and separate from the every-day hustle and bustle of common life—some-

thing which has nothing to do with buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, getting up and lying down again, trafficking, purchasing in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, going to law and being gone to law with ; in fact, nothing to do with the dreadful wear and tear, rattle, crush, and jumble which make up common human life. I tell you that so far from its being something separate and apart from these, it pervades all nature. It is co-existent with nature, and is a part of nature. It is sent to sanctify, to illuminate, and to cheer that nature itself. It is a part of nature—it is a part of religion—it is a direct emanation, a direct gift, a direct function and power planted in the world—planted in man's soul, in man's intellect, by the great God who is the God of order, who is the God of beauty, who is the God of everything lovely, of everything cheerful, of everything orderly, of everything consistent ; and with all other nature it advances towards that

“one far off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves—”

the realization of the Heavenly Jerusalem,—the consummation of all art.

I tell you art is all this. Once you feel that art is all this, you will know what the debt is ; and be ready for your payments. Look around you. Is the human figure weighed out in scales like tallow dips ? Are the clouds of heaven circumscribed with straight lines ? Do the trees grow as so many square feet of timber ready-made for the saw or axe ? Does iron come out from the earth already cast into bars ? In short, is there not a perpetual variation of colour and

curved lines, a perpetual flow, a perpetual alternation of light and shade in all creation? Does not man's countenance pass through an endless conflict of joy, and anger, and hope, and fear? Is not the sky sometimes overcast, and sometimes blue? Do not the trees put on their green summer hue and their rich autumnal tint? Is not the world dappled with hill and dale, mountain and plain, river and rich herbage, and the everlasting sea beating on the rocks around the land? Now then, when you have all these varied forms of beauty, tell me, if you dare, that it is not the Divine ordinance that man shall enjoy, that man shall cultivate beauty—that man in all he does shall seek after that Divine ideal of which beauty, consistency, economy, and appropriateness form the elements. This, I tell you, is art. Art is beauty: we all know that. But art is economy and appropriateness. What is good art? Good art is the faculty of being able, with the greatest economy of material and the greatest economy of colour, to produce the highest effects. I say economy, not scant. Materially speaking, you may use a great deal, but if every bit tells it is economically applied. Good art may in fact be described as the management (which is another word for economy) of invention. When you see a painting overdaubed with colours, when you see a piece of furniture dabbed here and there with gilding, carved up and down, twisted and turned without design, without consistent form—or when a woman is stuck all over with tags and jags and inappropriate colour, you say that is bad taste; and what is that but bad art—material wasted and unhusbanded invention? One line well drawn, one conscious stroke, reveals the



master artist, and that is art. You may remember the story of the old Greek painter. When he called upon a friend and wished to leave his name—(there were no cards in those days, because there was no engraving)—what did he do? He took up his friend's pencil and seeing his easel before him he drew a line. He put the pencil down and refused to give his name. His friend came in, and that line revealed the visitor. Now whether that story is true or false it is true in its application to us. It shows us what a true artist is. When a line is drawn with forethought, drawn with skill, drawn with mastery—not in a scribbling way, not overlaid with colour, not with all that forcible feebleness with which false art strives to conceal its poverty of invention in its superfluity of substance—there I tell you is art.

Art, I am happy to believe, has ever been a thing of which the world has always possessed more hidden store than it has at any time realized. In the time of our grandfathers and grandmothers it was the fashion for people to talk of art when they only meant painting and sculpture. Now it is true that painting and sculpture are two of the highest developements of art, but it is equally true that painting and sculpture are not the whole of art. They are what may be called creative art; they are the representations of figures and of scenes which are appreciated and valued according to the accuracy, the spirit, the purity, and the truthfulness of the representation of the absent reality. But if art were to be all representative, and if there were to be no art but that which imitated something absent, where would be our powers of grouping the beauties of common and

present life? Where would be the many perfections of things as they are? Where, to take one instance out of many, would be the artistic pleasantness of that furniture with which we fill our dwellings for the many needs of existence? Where would be all those means of charming the human eye with graceful forms, which the varied structure and the varied faculties of those materials which the world contains afford? Within a few years a distinction has grown up which is very important for us to observe. Painting, sculpture, and partially architecture are recognised as the "fine arts." The word "fine" is a stupid one: these special arts, at least the two first-named, should be termed the "imitative" arts. The elaboration of the various objects of common life, from the largest to the smallest—from the building in which we live, or the tower on which we gaze, to the jug which we hold in our hands—has come to be known by the name of industrial art. This epithet does not mean that its practice requires more industry than that of the imitative arts, but it is used in contrast to the art which is applied to the covering of a flat surface with the representation of something which was not there before, or the carving of a block of stone or marble, or the casting of a mass of metal, into the representation of some figure or group not in existence before. It means the invention of graceful and beautiful forms for those appliances of life which civilization requires for its own use and calls on industry to furnish. I tell you that this great acknowledgment of industrial art has revealed a new mine of thought to the world—has opened up a new application of all the art principles which we strive faithfully to trace out,

step by step, for our edification. I do not tell you that the idea of there being such a thing as industrial art is a novelty. We know that the case is quite the reverse. We know that from the very earliest ages industrial art existed as a fact. Among the relics of the remotest ages, in the British Museum and elsewhere, will be found most carefully moulded and modelled ceramics, metal work, ivory work, and so on—all of them industrial art. The Egyptians were giants in their day. The Greeks carried industrial art to an exceeding high point. So did the Romans; so did the artists of the Middle Ages; so did those of the Renaissance—Cellini, Palissy, and others;—so did, in short, all persons who, with an artist's spirit and practical industry, laboured for the convenience of their fellow-creatures. But still the term "industrial art"—the clear, philosophical distinction between "fine" or *inventive*, and "industrial" art, had not been so accurately laid down as it has been lately; and so, while industrial art was pursued as an instinct, it was not so clearly mapped and traced out as a branch of specific study as it has been in our own days. I am anxious to impress this point upon you because I should be very sorry that you should be amongst those who, while they prize their own generation and know its works, do so with stolid indifference or contempt for all the good which other ages have done before them, and upon which their own good has been built. I shall take up this definition of industrial art which our own generation has promulgated, and I shall work through with it. I appeal to the Exhibition held last year, and to the Exhibition held eleven years before that—I appeal to all the progress which was made between those two



exhibitions—and I call upon you to say whether the great world which lies between mere manufacture and inventive art is not a world of infinite variety, of infinite depth, of infinite width, of infinite opportunity for the richest and the poorest, for the most refined and the most simple, to wonder at and take their pleasure in. This is the world of “applied” or “industrial” art—“applied” art is another term for industrial art. I do not like either epithet, and there are very few terms which thinking people can be entirely satisfied with, for most terms are merely narrow inventions of man to define facts of which the extent and variety are indefinable. I appeal to you still further, and I ask you whether that world of applied or industrial art is not a world in which the artist and the practical man may sit down and be content—if it is not a world in which lavishness may effect the least, and management the greatest, results—if it is not a world in which the strictest economy may not be embodied with the most telling effect in working out forms of beauty, not dependent on parasite adornment, and finery hung on, but upon the eternal and immutable relations of form to matter, of colour to substance, of design to utility. I make this protest, I make this claim here in these Pottery towns, because in these Pottery towns the alliance between practical life and practical art is more clearly embodied than elsewhere. In Manchester, where cotton weaving prevails; in Yorkshire, where the woollen trade predominates; in Birmingham, where the iron works flourish, a man who dares to lift the standard of art may, indeed, do so with a bold front. He may stand to his own colours, because he has a definite principle

to stand to. He may plead his own cause, for it is the cause of truth; but the relations of cause and effect are not so visible and so immediate as they are in these Potteries, for the manufactures in those parts of England are not so intrinsically artistic as they are here, and so his task is not so plain a one. I am glad therefore that it has fallen upon me to carry out this argument in these Pottery towns, because I feel that the illustrations which I bring forward will come home more readily to you, that you will more easily understand them, and, in short, that I shall have a simpler battle to fight and a better vantage ground than if I fought it in any other manufacturing district in England.

Having said so much, I will come to another point, and call upon you not to be surprised if, in what I shall say on the further heads of my subject, I dwell very little on ceramic art. I shall, indeed, talk less of it than of any other, because I feel that ceramic art is a subject which it would be almost impertinent for me to dilate too much upon. You understand the bearings of commercial art in ceramics. You understand how beauty of form and economy of material go together. You understand how to be artistic and economic as well. Therefore if I attempt to enforce those truths upon you I shall simply be hammering at a question which you have already worked out and understood for yourselves. So I take the practical, commercial character of ceramic art for granted, and I carry you a step further, and call upon you to agree with me that all consistency, all logic, all common-sense, must lead you to carry your thoughts beyond home, and to see that the same reasons which made you ceramically artistic ought to

make you artistic in all other common productions of civilized human life. This is the art to which I appeal; this is the art of which I wish to treat; this is the art touching which the world owes a duty—the art, in fact, which is associated with, and not something apart from, the world's ordinary progress—not a Sunday coat which the world puts on, but the clothing which it must ever wear, and which may either fit well, and then it is good art, or ill, and then it is bad art. The world's smock-frock may be as artistic as the world's Sunday coat: perhaps it may be more so. I wish to deal with the cut of that smock-frock. You may, indeed, apply to good art and bad art very much what a clever man once said of prose and poetry, when he asserted that good prose was a subject described in the best words which could be found, and that poetry was a subject described in the best words which could be found, and those words also arranged in the best order. So it is. The world, in its non-artistic aspect, is a world of materials rightly working for their end: the artistic world is a world of materials rightly working for their end in the best shapes, forms, appearances, and order. The world, as I have told you, has never been so destitute of art as some may imagine. I carried you some moments ago very rapidly over a few past phases of history from which great artistic results appear, but let us look out for some age in which art appeared to be utterly dead and buried, sunk with a leaden plummet round its neck in the deep sea of indifference. I could not take you to a more appropriate period than the age of King George II.—that age in which women's dresses were even more hideous than they sometimes are now—the age in which,

except for Hogarth and Roubilliac, painting and sculpture had seemingly died out, and the Reynoldses, and Gainsboroughs, the Flaxmans and Chantreys, the revivers, had not yet appeared on the stage—the age when architecture consisted of dull, square, red brick buildings. Yet even in that age the divine flame still burned. In that age Hogarth painted, and even the heavy-minded King George II., who in the innocence of his heart said that of all the things he hated there were two which he hated most, “boetry and bainting,” even that man patronized the Chelsea china works. In George II.’s days, too, the Worcester china factory was set up, and in the last year of his reign Wedgwood first started on his glorious career. So even in the time of the king who hated “boetry and bainting,” we see distinctly that art still existed. But I have really given you no definition of art yet. Definitions, let me tell you, are the most impossible things in the world to give, unless a man puts on a wig and a gown, and pleads as a lawyer, or unless he produces an arithmetical or geometrical formula. Short of such formal definitions we must rely on illustrations. I do not pretend to do more to-night than illustrate, but I hope that some illustrations which I am giving may lead you to agree with me as to art’s all-pervading presence in, and co-existence with, the world in which we live.

Now then, how are we to pay the debt of which I am speaking? It has been proved to be a good debt, and must be paid, and thus I bring you back to the point from which we started. I am not talking of the debt to artists, but of the debt to art. How is that debt to be paid? It may be partly paid by the world drawing

a large bill at once on posterity for some tens of thousands or millions of pounds, written in one decisive line—that is, it may be paid in some one magnificent production, a nation's glory, such as Raphael's "Transfiguration," such as the Cathedral of Cologne or St. Peter's, or, coming to our own doors, such as the Palace of Westminster or the Menai Bridge. It may also be paid, as we pay so many other of our debts, by collecting from house to house, by little wooden boxes, with slits in the lids, set up in our passages—by shillings or pence collected by means of little pink cards, in as neatly printed covers, sent round by the general postman. I am talking practically, and I say it is a debt which must be paid in both ways, for neither method is in itself sufficient for its discharge. It is a very large debt, and while the smallest contributions are thankfully received, the largest donations will never be unacceptable. My work to-night is with the smallest contributors, and I wish to show how the world may be true to itself by being artistic while it is practical and while it is economical. I say practical and economical. If it is practical and economical, it is commercial too. I believe I shall show you that true art goes buying in the cheapest markets, while the world with which it deals does not let it sell in the dearest. In fact, economy of material is not so much economy of invention as of elaboration. Such art will be commercial art, and it will at the same time be true. There is also another kind of art which I ban and forbid, but into which I fear we too often run. It is the art of sham, it is the art of surface, it is the art of the veneerer, of the varnish pot, the art of the gilder, the art of the milliner,



the flouncer, and the advertiser—of big placards, blue, green, and yellow, and of gold letters on gigantic vans which run up and down the highways of the world, parading man's folly and woman's vanity to the detriment of real art. This is the art I will have none of, and which you must have none of. It may be trade art, but it is not commercial art. It is art with which I have very little patience. I just manage to keep the peace with the veneerer, though I like a piece of plain honest oak better than slices of coarse mahogany from Honduras, which peel, and curl, and crackle, and discolour, and lay bare the deal beneath, directly you put them near a cheerful fire. The grainer and the stainer I am civil to: I do not assault them, and that is all; but they are no close friends of mine.

I will give you an illustration of what I call trade art, and if there are not many things which you will recognize as trade art by the illustration, I shall be very much surprised. Some years ago our good friends of the United States, though the Morrill Tariff was not yet thought of, had a heavy rate of duties; perhaps so had we. Among those duties there was one which almost amounted to a prohibition on the importation of lead into the United States, but at the same time works of art were admitted free of duty. Well, on one occasion it was remarked that the quays of New York were heaped up with works of art in the form of great statues—not such works of art as we saw to-day, but statues of heroic proportions. It was noticed that these statues were made of lead—solid lead—and it was also noticed that they were all statues of one great living man, the illustrious ex-chancellor Lord Brougham. People were

very much surprised that there should be so many statues of Lord Brougham sent to America, for with all his grand intellectual capacity, and with all his eloquence, Lord Brougham was known to be one whose beauty was not of the strictest classical order. It was explained, however, that Lord Brougham was a great statesman and orator, and though it was not known before, it was added that Lord Brougham was so extremely popular and wellknown throughout the United States, that there could be no doubt that if there were a large supply of statues of Lord Brougham in the market, vendible at free-trade prices, the states and municipalities of what was then a Union would compete with each other for the honour and glory of putting up those statues in their public places. So these statues of Lord Brougham were works of art, and passed duty free. But it was a very curious fact that after they had passed duty free no one ever observed that any one of these statues was ever set up in the United States of America. Well, that is trade art. Need I go further? That story is of great use to me, for it is an example worth yards of argument to show what false art is—trade art made to be sold and melted into coin. Now let me tell you that those gilded, flashy looking-glasses; those great, veneered, lumps of furniture; those carpets with lilies and daisies made to be trodden down and worn out; those vulgar wall papers—all these are just as much trade art as the leaden statues of Lord Brougham, made up to be melted down as soon as they got to America.

Now I wish to take you a little beyond those leaden statues of Lord Brougham, and to show you how very

cheap real art may be. Let me tell you that the simplest arrangement of natural forms can be artistic. The part of England I live much in, the county of Kent, is a clay country, where for centuries bricks have been made, and a traditionary way of building chimneys has come down from age to age. The bricks are merely such common oblong bricks as you make here every day, but the chimneys are arranged on square and star-shaped plans projecting with successive courses of bricks over each other in the upper part, and sometimes put edgeways, so as to produce the most picturesque forms. These Kentish chimneys may be made by any common workmen: my own people produce them for me. My neighbours have the same, for it is the traditionary way of building chimneys in the Weald of Kent. Labourers, I say, who cannot read or write, are able to build these chimneys; and although they may not be artists themselves, they yet produce true and simple art, merely acquired by dealing with the regulation bricks which come into their hands. There is no reason why you should not build such chimneys here. It will only cost a few bricks more than the common way. Again, both in Staffordshire and Cheshire, and in the Weald, where the land used to be over-run with oak forests, our ancestors got knee timbers, shaped them, and formed their houses of them, filling up the intervals with cob. These were called post-and-pan houses: they were made of the simplest materials, and yet they looked very picturesque and kept their inmates warm. Well, there once was such a house in the market-place of Leek, which gave a character to the whole place, and what was done with it? Really, whenever I go into Leek I feel quite



vindictive about those old post-and-pan houses. The person to whom it belonged has pulled it down, and run up some hideous, gewgaw brick structure which makes one's eyes gritty to look at. Thus a picturesque and artistic inheritance was knocked to pieces and the old town vulgarised, because somebody did not realize his debt to art—some builder, or contractor, or Heaven knows whom. This is an instance, not of the debt to art having been paid, but of an augmentation to the debt being run up. So it is every day. We pay our debts by a little at a time, or we run up an account on the wrong side by simply shutting our eyes to the forms of beauty and appropriateness which are lying by Heaven's blessing at our feet, if we would only care to gaze upon them and pick them up.

Now let me draw a picture of what I call a very bad score indeed, run up by the world against art, and then we will see how we are to clear it off. As I said before, I do not go into ceramics. You know the difference between artistic and inartistic ceramics, and therefore I want to show you that if you merely stick to that and only deal with the developement of the fictile art—if you think there is nothing artistic or non-artistic in the world but ceramics, your very appreciation of ceramic art will soon fade away, your ideas will be cramped, and your own peculiar glory will be lost. I take as my example a row of houses which may be run up in Hanley or any other large town. I do not care whether they are the smallest four-roomed cottages or twelve or twenty-roomed houses in a row. What do you for the most see? You see so many stacks of bricks put upon the ground, to re-appear as a great, hideous, square

mass, with no outline and no sky-line, although in building a sky-line is a most important element of design, both for appearance and for use. You have a mere uniform mass of building. As it is in Hanley, so it is in Manchester, and Birmingham, in Bradford, in Newcastle, in London, or wherever else you may go—in every modern town is seen the same dead, dreary, uniform, square, soulless carcase. There is a square opening for the door—the door, with its uniform tariff of panels, with its unvariable brass handle, and if you are a professional man the same awkward black letters—“Mr. Jones,” “Mr. Thomson,” or “Mr. Smith,”—repeated a hundred fold. Then you have the same sash windows, the same stone slab underneath the windows, and the same chimney-pots. If you go inside, there is the same painted oil cloth in the passage, of a rhubarb hue; the same sort of paper lining the passages, with a fancy network of fountains or ruins in dirty cream-white upon a sick-blue ground. There are the same drab banisters to the stairs, and the same hat peg, the same sprawling carpet, the same utter want of individuality and character to which the building trade has reduced the average town habitations of the nineteenth century. I say that is the sort of house we build, and whether it is let for five or ten pounds, or for fifty, or for a hundred, it is often, in the latter case, only an exaggeration of the self-same dreary types. It is, in short, a house which is built by a builder and furnished by an upholsterer, and if an artist is called in at all, he is only called in to “decorate,” that is to say, to stick in a little superfluity here and there, because everything that could have been carried out with good

effect has already been carried out with no effect, before he was called in, by those who are not artists at all. This, I repeat, is the type of an Englishman's house in this enlightened century; and now let us go in and see its owner or tenant. Gaze on him in his chair. Look at his most extraordinary dress. Look at that coat—a coat, the like of which, I will venture to say (and if any one thinks I am wrong let him contradict me) no Fiji Islander, no Zulu Kaffir, nobody in any savage region, ever invented, a coat—which has no equal for inconvenience and ugliness—I mean that swallow-tailed coat, which drapes nothing, warms nothing, and holds nothing. See him as he rises from his chair and tops his swallow-tailed coat with his chimney-pot hat. Next look for a moment at the partner of his joys and sorrows, smilingly tripping after him in a shawl which was bought one day, and a gown which was bought on another, and is of a colour quite at variance with that of the shawl; and remember that I introduce you to friends of this season, and you will appreciate that to make things worse her gown is stretched over a crinoline, while on her fair head and over her bright, beaming eyes expands a coal scuttle bonnet. So we have a square pile of bricks, with square doors and windows, rhubarb-coloured oil cloth, staring wall paper, and carpets of flowers, where no man in his senses would ever think of putting flowers, and all possessed by a most respectable gentleman in a swallow-tailed coat and chimney-pot hat, and by a wife who would be a charming woman if it were not for a crinoline and coal scuttle bonnet. This is how we run up a ruinous debt, which we do not know how to pay. Let

us see how we may discharge the great liability. The material of the house is brick. How easy is it to chamfer the doors, to put in a little carving here and there, or a few coloured bricks—to put in perhaps the date at which the house was built, or the initials of those who built it—some little record, something to identify it, something cheerful, something historical, something by which No. 1 may be able to say “That is my house;” some mark by which No. 2 may know his house from No. 1, and mark the place he lives in. Then, inside, instead of rhubarb-coloured oil cloth, you may take if you please, and if you can get it, oil cloth of good patterns; or still better, you might use tiles, or wood inlaid in different patterns, as foreigners do. Next, let your wall papers be designed by young fellows of your own or some other School of Art, who have some idea of appropriateness of colour and graceful outline. Then there is the ceiling, that blank and cold expanse: even a few lines of colour scratches would make that dreadful Sahara of white plaster, which seems ready to fall down and crush you, a part of the room, as it is not now. A few nice prints or lithographs upon the walls would help to complete the artistic pleasantness of the room—a little carving of the banisters, a little turning here and there, would inspire life. Finally, instead of heavy veneered furniture in coarse mahogany, there should be light, graceful articles of simple forms, executed in deal or in some other British wood, and should show the natural grain; while more important furniture might be executed in British oak, or in a combination of oak and cherry. They are all woods which God Almighty has placed in

our hands to use instead of the splotchy imitations of the painter and the stainer. You may perhaps say that all these considerations are trifles. Each may be a trifle in itself, but altogether they are contributions towards paying off the great accumulated debt.

But how are we to deal with our friend in the swallow-tailed coat and the chimney-pot hat? Why, I will leave him to deal with himself, for man is enslaved to conventional rules in the matter of dress. But I do appeal to the fairer half, the very practical half of creation, (which I am sorry to have left so long in crinolines and coal scuttle bonnets,) to do a little towards working out their share of this great debt. But let me tell you that I am not joking in what I say. You know that I look upon art as something which pervades creation, and I say that among the arts which refine human nature is that of dressing with gracefulness and modesty. This is particularly the case with that portion of the world to which I am now speaking. Every girl who sticks a bow of ribbon in the front of her frock on Sunday, either pays part of the debt or accumulates the burden; it may be very little, but still it is something. But when I appeal to the ladies to dress well, I do not appeal to them to dress as Paris magazines direct them, or English magazines either. Sometimes the people in their pictures are dressed well, and sometimes they are dressed uncommonly ill. If the ladies will not believe that new magazines can err, I venture to ask if they have ever looked into old novels and magazines of good King George III.'s reign? I believe some of them may have, for sometimes there is no "Lady Audley's Secret," no "Stange Story," and no "Woman



in White," and then the old shelves are ransacked, and books re-appear with strange copper-plate illustrations of the dresses worn by their grandmothers, and believed by these worthy ladies to have been beautiful. Many are still alive who can recollect those extraordinary gowns, with waists under the arms, and those equally extraordinary bonnets, which came over the face like cowls upon very smoky chimneys; those dresses which clung so close to their wearers that they looked as if they had been draggled through a horse pond, and which were so short, that one would think all the ladies of that age had, with one consent, followed the example of St. Martin and cut off half their garments to cover the poor. Go on to about 1830, and see how the bonnets rose menacing to heaven, and spread out to the east and to the west, and how those clinging garments had turned plethoric in the sleeves. These of course are sights which must be painful to every well-regulated mind in 1863; yet each fashion in its turn received implicit credit. Was it then good dressing? Certainly not. Then come down to ten years ago, and you will find that the close-clinging dresses had filled out and expanded; the sleeves were vandyked, and great bows were out of fashion, while the head was covered with a small and modest bonnet. You ask if that is good dressing. I say it is. Women dressed well ten years ago, but they would not let well alone. They had got rid of St. Martin's gowns: they had got rid of bonnets which expanded to the east and to the west, and which rose to the zenith: they had got variety of colour. Having all these advantages they yet listened to some powerful but tasteless adviser, and so then they made

their gowns stiff with cages of whalebone and iron, reviving the costumes of Elizabeth and Marie Antoinette, which we thanked our stars had marched off, never, as we fondly hoped, to re-appear. But here are the old antediluvian hoops again; and the small graceful bonnet is changed for one which pokes up like a coal scoop. It was formerly a coal scuttle, but now you will agree with me it is more like a coal scoop. So there our ladies are. Ten years ago you were well dressed, ladies! but you would not let well alone, and now you are dressed—a *l'Imperatrice*.

These may appear trifling considerations, and you may think I have been playing with the subject. I have not. I prefaced by observing that I came here to tell you how to pay the world's debt to art with small change and weekly contributions, and not by large amounts drawn in bulky sums. Believe me, this attention to beauty, this attention to form and decorum in the smallest details, is necessary to lead you up to something more complete—to something greater. This is the world's debt to art, out of which the world's debt to artists will have to be paid. The world's debt to artists cannot be paid until the artist is found worthy to receive his payment. A few noble souls, superior to their time, may grow up even in the days when art is most corrupt, and carry out great achievements in an unsympathizing world, which stands wondering at what it calls their eccentricity. Such were Wedgwood and Flaxman, whom Wedgwood enlisted in his service, and such was that man who was one of Flaxman's early patrons, and who held out the hand to Wedgwood—my father, Thomas Hope, whose encouragement of

them I cherish as a link between you and me. But I say it is out of this attention to form and beauty, out of this attention to appropriateness, out of this attention above all things to common sense in the details of a woman's bow, and of a man's chimneys, his oilcloth, his ceiling, and his furniture, that a nation may, step by step, and line upon line, be raised to be artistic. If this be so, the real artist will grow out of that training. At the same time it will be a very bad thing for the country, it will be a very bad sign of the times—a sign of which I cannot help saying there are some lurid indications upon the horizon now—if applied or industrial art should overmaster the fine arts from the fine arts falling back or standing still. If the forms of pottery, and of woodwork, and the designs of carpets and paper hangings, and such like things, are to be artistic, while painting and sculpture follow the misleading lead of a feeble and fulsome criticism, and the artificial demands of an excited and luxurious condition of society, then the hopes of permanent improvement in national taste will surely be blighted. I am sorry to say there are painters now, who, instead of entering into a fair and an open competition with their brethren, and having their pictures hung upon the public exhibition walls, produce paintings, which are advertised a long time beforehand, to the order of some engraver or print-seller, who placards the walls as if he were announcing a sensation drama at the Surrey Theatre. The picture, when finished, is hung up by itself in a green room, with false lights disposed about, and is shown at a shilling each person, while the visitors are bowed and scraped about, and solicited to put down their names



for proof impressions. I will not mention names. We have seen that done more than once within the last few years; and if it become habitual, I say there is a great risk that the standard of "high" art, so called, may fall below the level of applied or industrial art. If such a result should come about, the general decay of artistic feeling would not be far distant. It is indeed possible for art-feeling to have attained conspicuous excellence in connection with the manufactures of countries where the fine arts do not exist. Such is the case of Mahometan countries, where it is forbidden to represent the human figure; but it is impossible for national art to survive the breakdown of antecedent excellence in painting or sculpture.

In face, then, of so great a misfortune, while we are paying this debt, as I have called upon you to do, in small coin, let not the larger instalments fall through. Let us pay our debt in every way, and let us, as I say, not neglect any material. Let the application of new materials and the new uses of old resources be costly where money abounds, as well as cheap where economy should reign. I have purposely thrown to the last the few remarks I have to make upon the fresh developments of the materials which we have at hand for the cultivation of dear art. Have any of you been at Milan? If you have, you may have seen in one of the bye-streets of the town an hospital, built in the 15th century, with exquisite mouldings round the windows, and many dainty details. Those are all moulded in terra-cotta, that is, a superior red brick. It must have cost a great deal of money, but it is only earth burnt in moulds, and who will dare say that

these Potteries of ours, if we had only had the genius to conceive the design, would not produce work equal in beauty to the old red brick hospital in a back street of Milan?

Then again, what seems so rude, so massive, so in-artistic as iron? And yet what triumphs of art may not be achieved in iron! Look at the Great Exhibition, and its great works in metal. Look at the Hereford screen and the Norwich gates, and the many other works of moulded iron. At Oxford, a great museum was recently built, and they have erected athwart and across it iron moulded into the largest forms of British vegetable life. You went, I hope, once and again to the Loan Museum, that marvellous accompaniment of the Great Exhibition, that most necessary corrective, which stood at our ears as a monitor, and whispered, "Be not too proud: do not think yourselves the only men: see what other days and other towns have done, and equal them if you can." What was one of the most striking and remarkable features of that display? It was an iron chair made by a trading and incorporated city of Germany, such a town as any one of our mid-land towns is now—Augsburg, which gave this chair, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, to the Emperor Rudolph II. It was executed by Rukers, and is covered with hundreds—I believe I am not going beyond the mark when I say thousands—of figures, some of them in high relief, some of them in low relief, and some of them actual statues, the whole showing the history of the world as unrolled in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, running over the back, and sides, and turnings of that chair. If that could be done in iron at Augs-

burg, in the 16th century, before steam engines were invented, before the machinery of the present day, before railroads were dreamt of, what may not, what ought not to be done now, with all these advantages? What great artistic construction may not be carried out in iron? What may you not do with that material, so malleable, and yet, when hard and annealed, so indestructible? Why should not these ironworks of ours, which cast their lurid light athwart the horizon every evening, why should they not become nurseries and seed-beds of art as much as the pottery works which surround us? Why should not the two go hand in hand? You know very well that among the prophetic enunciations respecting the "last times" there occurs this prophecy, that "for stones there shall be iron." May not that mean something? May it not point to a time when the supremacy of stone shall be challenged by buildings vaster, more indestructible, and quite as artistic—buildings constructed of that iron which the bowels of the earth yield so freely?

I lead you up to these considerations. I purposely lead you up to the gigantic promise of the future, from the smallest dealings with ribbons and door handles—purposely draw a strong contrast, because I wish to show you that art, which is God's own gift of beauty, occupies itself with the smallest and the humblest as well as, high in the heavens, with the vastest, the most remote, the most incomprehensible, the most gigantic ideas of man's intellect. A star in the heavens and a door in a house are God's creatures, equally—not one more so than another. The largest work of art and the simplest production of the simplest mind, with an

innate sense of beauty, are both equally art. To come back to ourselves, standing as we do here, in this centre of a manufacture which is pre-eminently artistic, it is for us, each one of us, to put a shoulder to the wheel. Look at the drawings which hang on these walls. They are genuine contributions towards the payment of the debt to art. They are well drawn and carefully worked out. They are not scrambling, scratchy, dauby productions, but they are carefully worked out by conscientious minds, by conscientious fingers, by the boys and girls of the coming generation. There they are. They are payments, large payments, in paper money—good, true circulating notes, not greenbacks—payments, as I said, towards the world's debt to art. But we have here got to do one special thing to-night. We have a School of Art here, and we want it to be established upon a solid foundation as an Albert Memorial—as a memorial of that good Prince who carried out the first Great Exhibition—as a memorial of the good Prince whose hereditary family motto and whose rule of life was "*Treu und fest*"—"True and fast," for which there cannot be a nobler or a truer motto for the students of a School of Art. Be sure you keep fast hold of the truth. Let your principles be true, and stick to them like men. I say let them be true, and follow them fast out. Let a man deceive himself, and get fast hold of a false principle, and then the more truly he follows his false principle out, the more his ideal deviates from the truth. Or he may have a true principle, and may be misled by the sirens of the world, and may follow it out loosely and falsely, and so in ceasing to be fast he will cease to be truthful. Therefore

let your principles be true, and follow them truly out. Hold fast to them: cling to them to very death, and then in art, as in morals, as in religion, as in all the duties of common life, you will come to the right end—you will achieve your purpose. I say you will attain the right. God speed that right. God speed it in art as in everything else, for art has its lot in everything in the world which is good, and true, and honest, and of good report: it is God's great gift to man, for his delight, for his advantage, for his improvement, now and for ever.















